

Cowgirl chocolates

[Business](#), [Industries](#)



Cowgirl Chocolates Case Study 1. What are some of the critical strengths and weaknesses of Cowgirl Chocolates that determine the success of this small business? Can the weaknesses be overcome by the strengths of the business? Some of the critical strengths of Cowgirl Chocolates that determine the success of this small business include product differentiation, quality, flexible return policy, and personalization. Cowgirl Chocolates is very modern creation since it meets the needs of a specific market of spicy and chocolate fans by combining both cayenne, a spice, and chocolate, a sweetener.

The business also is known for using premium ingredients in all of the chocolates it offers. The business not only offers a flexible return policy, which gives customers a full refund guarantee if they end up disliking the spicy truffles but also facilitates trial purchases for customers interested in the spicy chocolates. The company also uses personal notes in the Web site orders in order to build customer satisfaction. Some of the critical weaknesses of Cowgirl Chocolates include having a high production cost, not having a tailored mission statement for this specific business, and lacking focus.

Cowgirl Chocolates has to pay a lot of money for the packaging, ingredients, and travel expenses to make the hot caramel dessert sauce. The business also is unfocused because of weak distribution, there is no product definition or market research, and the target market is thus dispersed due to not having a properly defined consumer base. Yes, the weaknesses can be overcome by the strengths of the business if the business spends time focusing on the weaknesses listed in order to build a more successful small

business. 2. Using the total product view, describe the “hot and spicy chocolate truffle” offered by Cowgirl Chocolates?

Based on this product view do you think this product will be readily accepted by consumers? Why or why not? The “hot and spicy chocolate truffle” offered by Cowgirl Chocolates were offered in several flavors such as plain chocolate, mint, orange, lime tequila, and espresso. The plain chocolate, mint, and orange truffles were wrapped in gold wrappers, the lime tequila truffles were wrapped in green wrappers, and the espresso truffles were wrapped in red wrappers in order for the customer to recognize that this truffle was extra spicy and hot.

Personally, I believe the packaging of the truffles is not fully understandable because red does denote something hot, while the other flavors wrappers don't fully translate to being hot and spicy. The truffles were also available in gift boxes, drawstring muslin bags, a collectible tin, and also in a plastic bag if the customer chose to purchase the truffles on the Cowgirl Chocolates website. Personally, I do not believe that consumers will readily accept this product because the general market of consumers will more than likely purchase sweet, milky chocolates over hot and spicy chocolates.

The purchase of Cowgirl Chocolates fully depends on whether the consumer likes the taste rather than attractive packaging and different experience. 3. What market do you think the “hot and spicy truffles” is competing in—the hot and spicy food market, the chocolate candy market, the gift niche market, or other? Personally, I believe the “hot and spicy truffles” are competing in the chocolate candy market because when one thinks of the name “Cowgirl Chocolates” the word “chocolate” comes to mind rather than hot and spicy.

The hot and spicy food market is strongly associated with spices, sauces, Mexican foods, and Spanish influenced foods.

Cowgirl Chocolates thus seems more likely to be successful in the chocolate candy market rather than the hot and spicy food market due to the unique packaging of the truffles, the brand name given to the product, and the premium ingredients and price.

4. What is your assessment of Marilyn's promotional efforts? In order for Marilyn to increase the sale of her chocolates, should she use a push or pull communication strategy? Personally, I believe that Marilyn has been very effective with her promotional efforts in order to create customer demand. Through the use of her award-winning recognition for packaging at various art shows, advertising in her local newspaper, the Soviet Awards recognition of her unique and tasty products, and presence and involvement with Seattle Chocolates have thus far helped bring some awareness for her product. In order for Marilyn to increase the sale of her chocolates, she should use a pull communication strategy because the more publicity she is able to gain for product and creative packaging, the greater awareness she will thus be able to gain for her business.

5. As you examine Exhibit 2, you will note that Cowgirl Chocolates offers several gift packages (1/4 pound, 1/2 pound, 1 lb. gift bucket, gift basket, nothing fancy) that range in suggested retail prices from \$8.95 to \$59.95. Given these price and packaging alternatives what type of product (convenience, shopping, or specialty) is Cowgirl Chocolates? Based on this classification would the buyer decision more likely to be a routine, limited or complex decision? Explain your reasoning. Given these price and packaging alternatives I believe Cowgirl Chocolates are specialty products because they

are more expensive and thus for the most part exclusively distributed in either specialty stores or gift stores.

By classifying Cowgirl Chocolates as specialty products, buyer decision would more likely be a limited decision because it requires putting thought in the shopping process and therefore the decision whether to purchase or not purchase the product takes place in a store environment where the display of the products is thus very important to whether or not the customer will thus end up purchasing the product. 6. The suggested retail price and wholesale prices of Cowgirl Chocolates products are displayed in Exhibit 2 along with the product and packaging costs.

Based on this information, discuss the relative merits of using a cost-based, demand-based, or competition based pricing method. The relative merits of using a cost-based, demand-based, or competition based pricing method include recognizing that the retail prices are pretty much double the wholesale price. Thus, the combined packaging costs and the imported chocolate make these high-quality products very costly even before markups on the products are made at both the wholesale and retail level. Similarly, when one compares the price of for example, the half pound tin, that seems very expensive when compared to a 24 pack of Lindor Chocolate Truffles which costs \$12.00 a bag. 7. Construct a table consisting of the generic marketing mix strategies. Based on what you know about Cowgirl Chocolates, what marketing mix plan would you recommend to Marilyn and why? Based on what I know about Cowgirl Chocolates, I would recommend gift purchases to Marilyn because gift purchases are strongly influenced by

both situational and temporary conditions, which thus allow for numerous opportunities to purchase Cowgirl Chocolates.

Furthermore, these chocolates are very appropriate to give to a male consumer because research shows that men like hot and spicy foods more so than women. Cowgirl Chocolates would also be a good small gift to someone hosting a party or a dinner since a lot of consumers look around for a small gift in order to say thank you to the hostess.? 8. For a small business like Cowgirl Chocolates, what benefits and/or potential problems does a website offer? For a small business like Cowgirl Chocolates, a website offers both benefits and potential problems.

The benefits include providing Marilyn the opportunity to build an online customer database and a database with customers who are thus repeat customers. Another benefit includes the business Cowgirl Chocolates to gain online awareness by being featured on the appropriate online portals like chocolate candies and unique gift products. The potential problems include the possibility of sales increasing online and Marilyn thus must figure out a way to manage the increasing demand which might include having to pay additional costs in both packaging and shipping and additional labor costs in order to prepare the packages.